Utah Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT SOUTH SUMMIT SCHOOL DISTRICT November 13, 2006

The attached report contains the results of the first two phases (Self-Assessment Process and On-Site Validation Visit) of the Utah Special Education Program Improvement Planning System (UPIPS). This Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is conducted by the Utah State Office of Education (USOE) Special Education Services (SES), as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B. The process is designed to focus resources on improving results for students with disabilities through enhanced partnerships between district programs, USOE-SES, the Utah Personnel Development Center, parents, and advocates.

The first phase of this process included the completion of the Self-Assessment and the development of a Program Improvement Plan. The second phase, On-Site Validation, conducted in South Summit School District on October 19-20, 2006, included student record reviews, interviews with district and school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Parent surveys will also be mailed to a small sample of parents. Information from these data sources was shared in an exit meeting attended by staff from South Summit School District.

This report contains a more complete description of the process utilized to collect data and to determine strengths, areas out of compliance with the requirements of IDEA, and recommendations for improvement in each of the core IDEA areas.

Areas of Strength

The validation team found the following:

General Supervision

- South Summit School District uses and maintains up-to-date special education forms through IEP Pro.
- Each special education teacher is provided with access to the necessary technology, such as printers, computers, digital cameras, color printers, and computerized instruction programs in order to meet the needs of their students.
- South Summit School District has assigned a special education teacher to develop and supervise the
 specialized instruction for students with severe disabilities in an effort to provide continuity of services
 across all grade levels.
- All teachers in the district are provided with opportunities to state conferences and workshops to increase their skills.
- The Special Education Director/Coordinator presents an annual child find workshop to all school faculty in each school.
- General education teachers are generally aware of special education procedures and policies.
- Special education teachers are appreciative of the administrative support they receive.
- Awareness of importance of confidentiality and confidentiality procedures was high district-wide.
- All student files were secured in locked file cabinets with updated access authorization lists clearly displayed.
- All district personnel involved in the on-site visit were positive and helpful.
- All IEP forms meet USOE compliance standards.
- Excellent file organization model in place through the district.
- All students involved in extra-curricular and non-academic programs of their choice. Inclusionary practices in place and well accepted in each school setting.

Parent Involvement

- Most parents attend the annual IEPS of their students.
- Most parents are pleased with the programs offered by South Summit School District.
- Parents feel comfortable visiting classrooms and talking to their student's teachers.
- Special education teachers distribute the procedural Safeguards at least annually.
- Parents receive copies of IEP and eligibility documents when necessary or required.
- Parents attend meetings for placement, IEP's and eligibility, as shown by signatures in files and parent report.
- A majority of parents who attended the focus group meeting state that they are satisfied with the special education program.
- Evidence of effective communication between schools and parents.

- Notice of meetings received by parents. This was documented both in the reviewed files and from parent reports.
- All IEP forms are available in Spanish.
- Interpreters were present for meetings when appropriate, as shown by signatures in files.
- Files contained appropriate signed parental consent forms.
- Parent stated they receive Procedural Safeguards and understand them.
- Parents report their input is considered during evaluation/eligibility meetings.

Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment

- Technology is accessed by special education teachers to provide students access to the general curriculum, especially in the areas of language services and designing alternative communication boards.
- South Summit School District has a team member on the Utah Augmentative Alternative Communication Technology (UAACT) team.
- A high school special education teacher attended a UBSCT workshop; materials were purchased and are being implemented during the 2006-2007 school year.
- Students with disabilities are served in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Many students with disabilities receive specialized instruction in the general education classroom with paraeducator and teacher support.
- IEPs are completed using the IEP Pro system and include U-PASS information that outlines the necessary accommodations for each student.
- Evidence of well written Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP's) in special education files at the elementary and middle school.
- Students are fully included, where appropriate, in all general education programs.
- South Summit School District graduation rate for students with disabilities is above the district average for all students.
- Social skills programs are in place in all district schools.
- Co-teaching occurring in middle school general education classes.
- Evidence of differentiated instruction in general education classroom was documented during classroom observations.

Transitions

- The community of Kamas has worked with the High School Special Education Department to place students with disabilities on job sites to receive skills training.
- South Summit High School is developing a new peer tutor program and assists students in completing registration for ACT testing, as well as post high school applications.
- Transition forms were included in all applicable IEPs.
- Parts C to Part B transitions are timely.
- LEA representative participated in C to B transition meetings.
- Documentation of C to B Transition Plan included in special education files, when needed.
- Evidence in special education files that Part C is invited to initial IEP meetings.
- Post-high transition forms included in special education files, when needed.
- Evidence of effort to improve planning for transition.
- Students were appreciative of the special education services received and stated that they understand that accommodations they receive.
- Summary of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance was included in files of students exiting the school system due to graduation or aging out.

Disproportionality

- English Language Learners are provided with English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction to make progress.
- Special education referrals, when made, are coordinated with the ESL teacher to determine if the students have a disability or are non-proficient in English.
- Interpreters provided for parents and students by South Summit School District at all meetings.
- All short-term suspensions tracked on Power School.

Areas of Systemic Noncompliance*

- ✓ One Preschool teacher with an expired temporary license; One special education teacher over caseload limits.
- ✓ Evaluation team did not review existing evaluation data to determine whether additional data were needed to determine continued eligibility; Evaluation procedures not followed; SLD evaluations/eligibility determinations did not include a confirmation of each identified deficit by at least two measures of achievement; SLD evaluations/eligibility determinations did not include an observation of the student's academic performance in the general education classroom; SLD evaluations/eligibility determinations did not document the relevant behavior noted during the observation; SLD evaluations/eligibility determinations did not document the description of the instructional environment in which the observation took place.
- ✓ Copies to Parents of Review of Existing Data from not documented due to missing form.
- ✓ IEP Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statements did not document baseline or current data; IEP goals did not address all areas of need as identified on the PLAAFP statement; IEP did not address how the student will participate in state or district-wide assessment; Extended School Year (ESY) services, goals, and amount of time not included in IEP when ESY was selected.
- ✓ IEP files did not contain evidence of PLAAFP statements addressing transition strengths and needs; Transition plans did not include a course of study needed to assist the student in reaching long-range post secondary outcomes; Transition plans did not address the need for inviting a representative from an outside agency; Transition plans did not document the consideration of an interagency linkage; Transition plans did not document the use of age-appropriate transition assessments.

^{*}These areas represent items where the visiting team could not locate appropriate documentation of requirements of IDEA 2004 and Utah State Special Education Rules in student records or other data sources.